3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934) 1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

Expressed Purposes of the Chisungu

Secondary motives. Apart from such primary considerations, the Bemba, no doubt, have a number of secondary motives. As in the case of other rituals of this type the chisungu is an occasion for entertainment and the meeting of friends and relatives. These are mainly women, but men also visit the chisungu village for the purpose. As we have seen, few of the rites are solemn and a number of them provide opportunities for amusing play-acting, games and solo dancing. Women, in fact, speak of some of the rites as 'just playing'. The festive aspect of the chisungu must have been more marked in the old days when the rites took longer, the supply of food and beer was probably more ample, and the young men of the community were not away at the mines.

A number of Bemba seem consciously to realize that the chisungu is an occasion for the display of social status—the status of the parents of the bride and bridegroom and of the *nacimbusa* herself. At the ceremony I attended the exchange of food was, in Bemba eyes, on a pitiably small scale and, as we saw, Nangoshye constantly complained that she was being insulted by the mean fare cooked for her. Ceremonies in the old days seem to have involved a series of presentations of covered dishes of food (*ukutebeta*), of the kind known as 'honouring the son-in-law' that mark his reception into his bride's village before the chisungu takes place. A written account I obtained of the chisungu in the old days included four such preparations of food besides the porridge of festivity of which I have given an account.

This is a society in which the ceremonial expression of kinship obligations is important, especially in the long process of aggregating a young husband to his wife's village, so it is not unexpected that women should give importance to the chisungu as a centre of attraction for kinsmen. It is probable that much of the six months or so formerly given to the ceremony, was devoted to these ends. A successful and well-run ceremony attracts large crowds and contributes to the prestige of the *nacimbusa* and also to the village in which it is held. The dances provide an opportunity for expressing respect for status, so the *nacimbusa* employs the magic of attraction to make people come to her ceremony. Nangoshye explained that one of her objects in working so hard over the large models of snakes and other objects in the chisungu hut was to get the